

Recommendations to Modernize NEPA Implementation

Interagency Work Groups

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Work Groups:

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – Environmental Management Systems (EMS) Guidance: see **Adaptive Management and Environmental Management Systems** on page 2 below
- Adaptive Management – EMS – NEPA Handbook: see **Adaptive Management and Environmental Management Systems** on page 4 below
- Aligning / Harmonizing NEPA and other Laws Handbook: see **Aligning / Harmonizing NEPA and other Laws** on page 6 below
- Guidance on Establishing Categorical Exclusions: see **Categorical Exclusions** on page 8 below
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Adaptive Management and Environmental Management Systems

Interagency work group to develop and recommend guidance on linking the NEPA process with environmental management systems (EMS).

Work Group Leader for NEPA – EMS Guidance:

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Mark Sudol
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Karen Waldvogel
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Adaptive Management and Environmental Management Systems

Interagency work group to develop a handbook providing useful practices for linking NEPA and EMS and/or adaptive management processes (AM) with case studies that highlight successful characteristics for AM and/or EMS to complement the NEPA process.

Work Group Leader for Adaptive Management-Environmental Management Systems – NEPA Handbook:

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Aligning (Harmonizing) NEPA and other Laws

Interagency work group to develop a handbook to address the coordination of NEPA with one or more major environmental consultation and coordination requirements.

Work Group Leader for Aligning / Harmonizing NEPA and other Laws Handbook:

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Categorical Exclusions

Interagency work group to develop and recommend guidance on how to develop and revise categorical exclusions (CEs). The proposed guidance will include methods available to: describe a category of actions, substantiate the determination that the category of actions does not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment, and involve the public in the development of CEs.

Work Group Leader for Guidance on Establishing Categorical Exclusions:

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Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Department of Transportation (DOT)

Categorical Exclusions

Interagency work group to develop and recommend guidance on applying an agency's CE to a specific proposed action. The proposed guidance will address how agencies can substantiate the determination that a CE is appropriately used for a proposed action, and how agencies can better inform the interested and affected parties of this determination.

Work Group Leader for Guidance on Using Categorical Exclusions:

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Collaboration

Interagency work group to:

- (1) develop and recommend guidance to federal agencies on the components of successful collaborative agreements, and to develop examples (templates) applicable to various types of NEPA analyses and stages of the NEPA process (from initiation or scoping through publication of NEPA documents); and**
- (2) develop a “useful practices” handbook on collaboration with case studies that showcase the characteristics of successful collaborative efforts.**

Co-Leads for Collaboration Guidance and Handbook:

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Environmental Assessments

Interagency work group to develop and recommend guidance to federal agencies on environmental assessments (EAs). The proposed guidance will address: the requirements and contents of EAs; the appropriate range in size of EAs based on the magnitude and complexity of environmental issues, public concerns, and project scope; public involvement; alternatives; and mitigation, particularly when the EA concludes with a mitigated finding of no significant impact.

Work Group Leader for EA Guidance:

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Monitoring

Interagency work group to develop and recommend guidance to federal agencies on ways to collaboratively monitor proposals that rely upon the use of CEs and EAs to satisfy agency NEPA requirements.

Leader for Guidance on Collaborative Monitoring of CEs and EAs:

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Programmatic Analyses

Interagency work group to develop and recommend guidance on providing a description in programmatic NEPA documents of when and how issues raised at the programmatic level will be subsequently addressed.

Work Group Leader for Programmatic “Roadmap” Guidance:

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Programmatic Analyses

Interagency work group to develop and recommend guidance on the different uses of programmatic analyses, and the appropriate scope, range of issues, depth of analyses, and the level of description required for documenting programmatic analyses.

Work Group Leader for Programmatic Guidance:

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Training

Interagency work group to develop and recommend training for senior decisionmakers that describes how a well run NEPA process benefits management. The workgroup will also develop a decision model on how to use a NEPA process that emphasizes early involvement and collaboration.

Interagency work group to develop handbooks that describe how interested and affected parties (e.g. decisionmakers, tribes, NGOs, permit applicants, state and local governments and the public) can be involved in the NEPA process in order to inform and focus a timely process.

Interagency work group to develop and recommend training for interested and affected parties (e.g. decisionmakers, tribes, NGOs, permit applicants, state and local governments and the public) on the principles of NEPA and NEPA requirements, agencies' missions, scoping, collaboration skills, dispute resolution, and effective public involvement.

Work Group Leader for Training Recommendations:

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